



**BOROUGH OF NEW PROVIDENCE
AGENDA**
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, March 12, 2025 – 7:30 P.M.
Lincoln Room - Municipal Center
360 Elkwood Avenue, New Providence, New Jersey

1. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 7:37 PM.
- 2.

3. Roll Call

Member	Class	Type	Present	Absent
▪ Malathi Ananthakrishnan	A		X	
▪ Dan Badgley	B		X	
▪ Molly Springer	C		X	
▪ John Sponauer	C		X	
▪ Jeff Grob	C		X	
▪ Richard Angel	C – Alternate #1			X

Also attending: Councilman Matt Cumiskey

4. New Business

- A. Review and Discussion of Draft of Commission's Annual Report to Borough Council.

Jeff had distributed a draft of the Commission's Annual Report to the Mayor and Council prior to the meeting and asked if anyone had any comments before it was submitted on behalf of the Commission. Members' comments were incorporated, and the members voted to submit it as written.

- B. Report on Jeff Grob's March 8th Attendance at Preservation New Jersey's HPC Round Table: Historic Preservation, Documents & Planning Conference in Milltown, NJ.

Jeff gave a short recap of the conference that he attended the previous Saturday in Milltown and was sponsored by the group Preservation New Jersey. Three main areas of interest were discussed: the National Registration listing process, Historical Societies, and Historic Preservation Commissions and issues associated with each. One thing that was mentioned in the presentation was the roles of historic preservation commissions in the community and how they can be most effective. Historic Preservation Commissions are the strongest when they are regulatory vs. advisory boards which are considered weak commissions. The presentation was given by Margaret Hickey, a preservation architect and is available for download if desired.

- C. Discussion on Borough's *Board, Commission, and Committee Members' Handbook*.

Jeff reiterated the Council's desire to have all members of the Commission read the newly created *Board, Commission, and Committee Members' Handbook* and sign the acknowledgement at the end that states that you have read it. Matt gave the members

a more in-depth background explanation of why the need for a handbook and what the Council hoped to accomplish with its publication.

D. 160 Oakwood Drive update.

One new building on the western-most lot closest to the Livingston Path has been framed, sheathed and roofed. There are still two more lots have not been touched yet with no further information as to their ultimate disposition

5. Old Business

A. Status of Properties Currently Listed On Historic Properties List.

Malathi submitted her sheets for the Zone 3 listings that she has completed. John indicated that he will get started on the Zone 4 listed properties (previously the responsibility of member Megan Beecher) next week.

B. Continued Discussion of Other Properties With Listing Potential.

There was discussion on how historic properties should/could be identified and considered dividing list by properties more than 80 years old (c. 1930s) vs. those newer than that that may be good representative examples from newer periods of architectural and cultural noteworthiness. The members discussed that once the original list is completed, compiling the second list of properties that should be listed across the five zones would be the next priority. As examples, Jeff mentioned a farmhouse on Maple Street between Central and Mountain Avenue as an historic property that should be listed for its historic nature (rural farmhouse of the late 19th Century) and a more contemporary home at the corner of Maple Street and Mountain Avenue that is a clear example of what's now known as "Mid-Century Modern".

C. Continued Discussion of a Letter to Property Owners.

When suggested with the idea of sending a letter to property owners of historic properties throughout the Borough at a previous Council meeting, Mayor Morgan was receptive to the idea of doing something along these lines. The members felt that we should focus on completing the letter this year. Molly suggested the possibility that Mayor Morgan could additionally announce in various media outlets the list of historic buildings more generally to increase awareness among all residents, not only those who live in historic buildings.

D. Continued Discussion Regarding Strategies discussing the reasoning of the economic benefits of historic preservation and making historic preservation an element of the Borough's Master Plan.

Jeff referenced a study completed by Rutgers that outlines the benefits of historic preservation and historic property listings within a town. Some discussion centered around how do we want to generate public support for keeping an existing building? It has been proposed to team up with the Historical Society.

E. Continued Discussion of Presentation to Mayor and Council.

Members further discussed the presentation being prepared for the Mayor and Council and what message that it should convey. It was felt that the presentation should have several parts that highlight the role and purpose of a historic preservation commission, the need for a historic preservation element in the Borough's master plan, the difference between a weak and a strong commission, and the economic and cultural benefits of historic preservation.

6. Council Liaison Comments – In addition to the earlier comments regarding the Borough handbook, Councilman Cumiskey also made two other suggestions regarding additional activities that could promote better public awareness of the historic aspects of the town. These included having an “Historic Walk Through New Providence” house tour, and the possibility of holding a public open house, maybe in the gym or another facility, where boards and other displays of information regarding the history of New Providence can be shown for the public to peruse and discuss with representatives from the Historical Society and the Historic Preservation Commission.
7. Miscellaneous Business - None
8. Communication Items - None
9. Adjournment The meeting was adjourned at 8:35PM